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**Reflection #2:**

**How important is the literature review (and differentiating between various types of journals) and assessing prior research, theorists, and current instructional strategies?**

Literature review can be defined as a detailed evaluation or assessment of prior research. Literature reviews integrate previous research, and ultimately form a synopsis of the research topic. Literature reviews are extremely significant for action researchers, as they offer insight into the research topic. They inform researchers of the areas of agreement and/or disagreement of the topic. They allow researchers to understand both sides of an argument. They present evidence from both sides of the argument, and evaluate this evidence, in an unbiased manner. Literature reviews can help the researcher to form or confirm their own educated opinion. Researchers use literature reviews to gain a better understanding of the different viewpoints on their topic of choice, and learn about previous research (Levy & Ellis, 2006).

Differentiating between different types of journals is very important, as all journals published do not have the same level of credibility. There are many different types of journals. Peer-reviewed journals are reviewed by scholars in the same field as the author and evaluated on the accuracy, quality, significance, and appropriateness. This process of peer-reviewing ensures that the journal is written at the best academic level possible (Stichler, 2011). Other journals may simply rely on the editors to decide if the journal offers information that is accurate and appropriate. A peer reviewed or blind-refereed journal is going to have more credibility than a trade magazine. This is not to say that journals that are not peer-reviewed or blind refereed are not valid sources of information. However, when researching a topic, and conducting a study, one must be able to base their understanding and findings on credible sources, in order to enhance the strength of the study.

Assessing and studying prior research is very important for researchers, as it educates current researchers on the studies that have been conducted previously and the findings. The greater the amount of times a study has been conducted, the greater the credibility or significance of the findings, if the findings are consistent. The amount of history or previous studies based on the research topic is going to affect how an action researcher approaches their own research. The consistency of the findings and the variables assessed are also going to affect how a researcher approaches the topic. While experience is going to heavily impact a researcher’s hypothesis, prior research and confirmed findings are also going to have an effect on a researcher’s hypothesis. How previous researchers conducted the study may also influence how one test’s their own hypothesis. Current researchers must do their best to improve the strength behind the tests performed, based on previous studies conducted, learning from the faults of particular studies.

Theorists and current instructional strategies are also extremely important in action research. A researcher must be educated on theorists’ ideas and understandings of the topic. They must be able to either identify with renowned theorists on the topics, or be able to offer an explanation of why they may disagree. Education is not a new or recent issue, but has been debated over for many years. Theorists have conducted a great deal of research and offer established viewpoints on particular issues. They have established ways to approach education that have been recognized by society. Theorists help action researchers in forming opinions about how education is to be implemented. Action researchers may also improve the strength of their work, if their study proves to be incoherence with or supporting theorists on a particular research topic. Current instructional strategies are important, as an action researcher must be aware of what is currently being implemented in schools. The purpose of action research is to research a current issue and find a solution that can realistically be applied to the classroom. Current instructional strategies are going to affect the question or topic being researched. The current instructional strategies are going to impact how a researcher identifies an issue, conducts the study, searches for a solution, and applies the solution. After research has been conducted, researchers should offer an intervention of the issue being researched. The way in which the intervention is implemented is going to be affected by the current instructional strategies.

References:

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